

## THE ARGUS.

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By THE J. W. POTTER CO.

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Correspondence solicited from every township in Rock Island county.



Tuesday, March 13, 1906.

A Chicago canine has by his master's will, become heir to \$20,000—dog on the luck.

The slight alteration in the familiar style of the heading of the Chicago Tribune seems like the passing of a landmark. Trifling as the change is, it does not look a bit natural.

The United States supreme court has rendered a decision adverse to the paper trust. There is one anti-trust ruling which even the republican journals ought to be inclined to sustain.

Susan B. Anthony, one of the noblest of her race, is dead. She did more for her sex than probably any other woman in public life in her generation. What higher tribute can be paid to her memory?

Once again, permit The Argus to suggest to the mayor that its columns are open to any communication he may be pleased to offer on any subject of current or public interest or, in defense of his official course, or policy. The only restriction being that he refrain from blackguardism or improper language of any sort.

Falling in every other means of checking the railroad rebate bill, the administration senators seem now determined to do so by burden and encumber the people's measure with amendments as to make it practically meaningless when it does pass. The enactment has a safe pilot in Senator Tillman, but whether or not he can keep it on the track with the breakers that are being thrown in the way by the railroad experts in the higher body of congress remains to be seen.

Ald. McCormick, of Chicago, is vigorously advocating military rule as the only way of checking the wave of crime that is now sweeping over the city. He seems to think that to place the government of the police force under some sort of military rule would accomplish the purpose. From the foundation of our government this Alexander Hamilton idea has been popular with the federalists, but it has never taken well with the people. In spite of all such notions, we live in a republic and do not take to Russian methods.

One of the visitors at the meeting of the state committee in Chicago, after listening to the speeches made on that occasion, said: "Any man who thinks the democratic party as a whole is interested in the differences of some of the participants in the last state convention will discover his mistake by going among the people. The fact is that the average democrat cares nothing about convention scraps and the party can gain nothing from the efforts of those concerned to stir up ill feelings." The visitor spoke the truth. It is time to stop quarreling.

The people of Chicago have the problem of municipal ownership of local transportation facilities presented to them for solution in about as plain a manner as could be desired. With the ruling of the supreme court of the United States to the effect that the franchise of some of the most important street railway corporations are void, the opportunity is presented, but on the other hand there is the opinion of the expert Dalrymple that American cities are not yet ready for public control of such utilities and that to his mind the proposition is impracticable and illogical at the present time. So it's to the citizens of the windy city, through their common council to determine the question. The way is open if the way is at hand.

## Building Operations.

Although the building season of 1906 has not yet opened, there is decided activity in building circles, with everything indicating a prosperous year. Official reports from nearly 60 leading cities of the country, compiled by The American Contractor, show that the steady gain over last year that has been chronicled from month to month was fully sustained during February. While the open winter has had something to do with the large operations of the recent past, it cuts but a small figure in the present report, since the permits it records are mostly for buildings that will not be erected before the advent of spring.

Of the 59 cities from which official reports are presented, only 16 show a

loss as compared with February of last year. The loss in Baltimore is 49 per cent, due to the circumstance that the city is practically rebuilt, or arranged for. The only other cities of importance that show a loss are San Francisco, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh—two per cent in the first instance, 17 in the second and 10 in the last. The gain in New York is 55 per cent, which becomes very remarkable when we remember the unprecedented building activity that has prevailed there during the past two or three years. In Los Angeles the building operations continue at the rate of over \$1,000,000 a month and the city is in the same class as St. Louis and other big cities.

## The Telephone Situation.

The council acted wisely in deferring definite action on the telephone situation long enough at least, to permit the people to give the present phases of the subject attention and thus to form their own conclusions as to the wise course to pursue in the interest of public welfare as well as public convenience. The council has been going through a season of education on the subject of telephony as prescribed by the Central Union company and as applicable to Rock Island. The people should have the benefit of the same experience, and to the end that they may have the advantage of such information as is at hand the present status of the case may be summed up briefly. This is the condition that confronts the city: It may effect a compromise with the company enjoying privileges in the city at the present time, obtain what it can in betterment of service, accommodations and rates, on the strength of a 25-years franchise, or it may throw the entire controversy into the courts for adjudication.

So far the council has been inclined toward compromise if this can be accomplished in a manner profitable to those who are to be served with telephonic service. To this end, the company has agreed to do a number of things, which may be enumerated as follows: To put its wires under ground in the fire district at an expenditure of \$60,000, to give the city 75 telephones, 50 of which are for public service, fire, or police alarm and the others, supposedly for city officials, and to supply such other instruments as may be desired by the city at half rates; to waive its claims to perpetual franchises; to use two of its ducts in the underground system and also its poles in all parts of the city for the conveyance of wires for the fire or police alarm service; to charge only such rates as are in force in cities of like size and character, with the provision that the council does not waive the right of the city to fix the rate at any time the power be so given under existing franchises by legislative enactment.

The council has yielded to the company on the point that while the company is to install the wires essential to the operation of the police and fire alarm systems both in the underground and on the poles, the company need not furnish the material or take upon itself the responsibility of maintenance; that the company is not to forfeit all property in case its stock is transferred to a competing company.

This leaves three points still in dispute—the 2 per cent franchise tax, the rate question, and recognition of union labor.

Regarding what has been accomplished, the company has made concession as to the underground system, which, while it may not have come otherwise during the life of the present material in use in the overhead apparatus, will prove mutually advantageous as between the company and the people, and in any event is eminently desirable and the quicker it is secured the better. The free telephone concession is something, particularly as it would apply to general city business, but it would not prove so serviceable to the fire department if an automatic alarm is installed. The taking care of police and fire alarm wires underground and overhead would be very desirable.

As to the points on which the city has made concessions, they are not material and seem reasonable. In a business transaction any corporation would be expected to protect itself from responsibility over which it had no control in the matter of maintenance and an agreement that would involve the possibility of forfeiture of property would, it is contended, affect bond issues.

So that, coming down to the three points still at issue, the question of franchise taxation seems to be the least important as far as the uses of the service are concerned, and might be withdrawn if the company could be brought to reasonable terms on the other propositions. The rate question might be adjusted through limitation of the franchise or stipulation as to how many years a stated rate may be in effect. The labor condition is of utmost importance. The council has asked that the company agree to subscribe to the union labor scale and the eight-hour day. The company has held this to be impracticable owing to different conditions existing in different cities, but has expressed willingness to include a clause not to discriminate against union labor in the employment of help. The council has met this with a counter proposition that union labor be given the preference. And there that matter rests. The suggestion has been made that this phase of the question could be readily cleared up by the company entering into a contract with union labor as applied to its Rock Island plant, and this might afford a logical solution.

With the situation thus in mind, the people may reach their conclusion as to how far the issue has progressed so far with consideration of their interests. The Argus, for its own part, has no hesitancy in saying that it believes the council has labored conscientiously to adjust the controversy in a manner most beneficial to the city. The officers and representatives of the company have not the city, too, in a spirit of frankness and in an apparent disposition to be fair, but the present company is laboring under the disadvantage that has come through the unpopular attitude of the corporation in the past, which naturally created a prejudice in the minds of the people that it is hard to efface. It is to be hoped that the controversy may yet be adjusted in a manner that will give to the city both the protection that it is reasonable to exact and the public convenience that becomes a city the size of Rock Island.

## Mr. Roosevelt's Appointment of Loud.

Chicago Examiner: The universal postal congress will assemble at Rome on the 6th of April next. The countries of the world will be represented to discuss the possibility of improving postal service—of benefiting the earth's inhabitants by intelligent distribution of mail and merchandise.

The civilized countries outside of America will send to the congress civilized, intelligent, worthy men.

Whom does Mr. Roosevelt, on behalf of the United States, send to this congress?

He sends Mr. Loud of California to represent our postoffice.

And who is Mr. Loud?

He is the man, as chairman of the congressional committee in charge of the postoffice, had power to confer the greatest possible benefits upon the people of the country and the postoffice employees.

What did he do?

He used his power for the railroads. He acquiesced in an arrangement which pays outrageous amounts of public money to public railroads and pays the smallest possible salaries to letter carriers, postal clerks and others.

Loud is the man who thought it perfectly right to pay for a year's rent of a rickety postal car as much as it cost to build the car—thereby giving the railroad a hundred per cent on its investment for the rent of the car alone.

He was the man who thought it all right for the government to pay extraordinary and ridiculous prices for carrying the mail, in addition to paying an extravagant rental for a badly built car, which always went to pieces in case of railroad accident.

Loud is the man whose servility to railroads and unfair treatment of postoffice employees was exposed in the Hearst newspapers in the east, in Chicago and in California, where Loud had to get his votes.

And Loud is the man who was beaten when he ran for congress last time. He had been elected by a plurality of 1,995 votes.

He was defeated by a plurality of 6,735 votes—surely a decided expression of public opinion.

What else does the country know about this Mr. Loud?

He is the man paid by the people of the United States, and supposed to represent them, who had the impudence to say:

"Such business as the postoffice now does in carrying fourth class matter should be done by private enterprise. If I had my way, the postoffice would give no more facilities than it gives today—it would give fewer."

This statement was published in the World's Work for December, 1903.

It would have been thought that a man like Loud, shamefully subservient to railroads, arrogantly indifferent to the will of the people, would have mixed no more in United States postoffice affairs after being kicked out of office by the voters.

But the railroads want Mr. Loud to be taken care of.

They owe him many tens of millions of public money which they wouldn't have got if a different kind of man had been in his place.

The railroads want to reward Mr. Loud for his faithful servility. And, of course, they want the American people to pay the reward.

And Mr. Roosevelt, to his shame, be it said, is carrying out the wishes of the railroads in sending this disgraced Mr. Loud to represent the United States at the universal postal congress in Rome.

Is not that shameful misuse of executive power?

The man in Mr. Loud's own district ought to know something about him. By a plurality of 6,135 they declared that he had proved himself unworthy in office, and therefore they removed him. He was beaten in strongly republican district.

What happened? Loud was off one payroll, but the railroads knew he was loyal to them. And the railroads didn't want the United States to send over a man who would come back with the idea of having the postoffice serve the people better and railroads less well. They picked out as the representative of America the man who had said, "If I had my way, the postoffice would give no more facilities than it gives today—it would give fewer." That was the kind of man they wanted.

And that is the kind of man Mr. Roosevelt has given them.

Our representation at Rome is a disgrace to the people of America, a disgrace to the postoffice, a disgrace to Mr. Roosevelt, and a direct insult offered by him to the American voters, whose decision he has overruled. If the people remove a man from their payroll, Mr. Roosevelt should not put him back. He will realize that eventually.

## DAILY SHORT STORY

## UNCONSCIOUS BEAUTY.

(Original.)

There was once a king whose queen had been so vain of her beauty that he directed that their only child, a daughter, should be kept from seeing her own features as long as possible. The queen died when the little princess, Henrietta, was an infant, and the king placed the child in one of his palaces, where she was brought up in charge of her aunt, the Duchess Margaret. Not a mirror was permitted in the palace, and the king ordered the water in the artificial lakes and basins with which the spacious grounds abounded to be drawn off, for fear the princess should catch the reflection of her face. From time to time the duchess was required to make reports to the king concerning her charge.

"The princess is growing to be very beautiful," the duchess reported when Henrietta was sixteen years old, "and is absolutely unconscious of her charms."

"Tell her," replied the king, "that she is very homely." The order was obeyed. The princess, who up to this point had not thought of her own appearance, was seized with a desire to see what she looked like, and the duchess was obliged to double the obstructions she had thrown in the way of her doing so, but in time Henrietta began to consider that the sight of her ugliness would only distress her, and she made a vow never to see a reflection of her face.

When she was twenty her father died suddenly, and she became queen. Those near her at once broke the secret of her beauty to her, but she would not believe them. "Now that I am queen you are all disposed to flatter me," she said, "and, though I be uglier than Medusa, you would make me believe I am beautiful as Venus." Her first edict was that any one being instrumental in showing her her features should at once be beheaded.

Many neighboring princes proposed for the hand of the queen, but she, believing in her ugliness, feared that when they came to see her they would be shocked, and she would listen to none of them.

Now, Queen Henrietta, having no strong minister to assist her in governing or to foil her enemies, soon became a prey to a coalition of kings who formed an alliance to invade her kingdom, conquer it and divide it among them. The queen did the best she could to stem the tide that set in against her; but, having no general on whom she could rely, her forces were beaten, and there was every prospect that her kingdom would soon belong to her covetous neighbors. For some time a young officer, Theodoros, had been rising through merit alone from one command to another, and at last the queen decided to appoint him her general in chief. She had never seen him—indeed, she knew nothing of him except what he had accomplished in her service.

Meanwhile she was so troubled about her affairs that no one dared risk being instrumental in showing her that she was beautiful instead of ugly, for in her present mood even the discovery that she had been mistaken might lead her to deal unmercifully with her informant.

No sooner had the young general come to the supreme command than the tables were turned against the queen's enemies. In a series of bat-

ties in which he displayed not only great vigor and generalship, but personal bravery, he routed the armies of his foes, laid waste their own kingdoms and annexed them to the kingdom of his sovereign.

When the war was over great preparations were made at the capital to receive the victorious army. Even before his arrival the queen made Theodoros a prince, but this was only the beginning of the honors that were to be given him. He marched home with that portion of his army not needed to control the newly acquired kingdoms and rode at its head on its entry into the capital. The queen had directed that a throne be placed on the spacious elevation forming a front to her palace upon which to receive the young hero. For fear he might break the law in showing her her supposed ugliness and thus lose his head she sent him a copy of the edict emboldened on velvet. Upon his arrival at the palace he threw himself from his horse before the throne and was about to kneel at the queen's feet when he was startled at sight of her transcendent beauty. Then, instead of kneeling, he thrust his polished shield before her face. The effect was electrical. The queen gazed for a moment at her features, then, rising from her throne, knelt at her subject's feet.

"Be thou king," she said. "I am no longer worthy to be queen, for you have disloyally my edict, and as your sovereign I should be obliged to behead you. That I cannot do."

Theodoros, raising her, led her back to the throne, then knelt before her. "Gracious queen," he said, "I am ready as ever to die in your service. In the field I served an unseen sovereign, facing death from a sense of duty. Now that I behold your august loveliness and have given you a sight of it, I am ready to pay the penalty. I await your majesty's executioner."

Then the queen ordered another throne to be brought, and amid the huzzas of the people ordered the prince she had created to sit upon it beside her and the heralds to proclaim him king, thus signifying her royal will that he should be her husband.

The reign of Theodoros and Henrietta was the most glorious that had ever taken place in the kingdom. F. A. MITCHELL.

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